

Case 3530**PLINTHINI Lacordaire, 1863 (Insecta, Coleoptera): proposed conservation and *Plinthus* Germar, 1817: proposed conservation by designation of *Curculio megerlei* Panzer, 1803 as the type species**

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Abstract. The purpose of this application, under Articles 65.2 and 78.1 of the Code, is to conserve the current usage of the weevil generic name *Plinthus* Germar, 1817 and the family-group name PLINTHINI Lacordaire, 1863. These are threatened due to a misidentification and emended spelling of *Curculio meyerlaei* Fabricius, 1801 (ENTIMI-NAE) by Panzer (1803) and subsequent emendation of the spelling of the Fabrician species as *Curculio megerlei*. It is proposed that *Curculio megerlei* Panzer, 1803 be ruled to be an available name and designated as the type species of *Plinthus* Germar, 1817.

Keywords. Nomenclature; taxonomy; PLINTHINI; *Plinthus*; *Tylotus*; *Curculio megerlei*; *Curculio meyerlaei*; weevil.

1. Misspellings of the specific name *Curculio meyerlaei* as *megerlei*, and confusion between two different concepts of the species, threaten the stability of two well-known weevil generic names, *Tylotus* and *Plinthus*, and could lead to the family-group name PLINTHINI being made unavailable.

2. Fabricius (1801, p. 521) described *Curculio meyerlaei* based on an unknown number of specimens from Austria, sent to him by D. Scheidler. Although later authors evidently believed Fabricius was honouring Megerle with the name, and modified its spelling accordingly, Megerle's name is not recorded either as the source of the specimens or as the basis of the specific epithet. In the Fabrician Collection, now housed in the University Zoological Museum, Copenhagen (Denmark), there are two specimens under the name *Curculio meyerlaei*. They were sent to the first author with the information: 'Syntypes, Kiel II.521.84' and a label in brownish paper: 'Meyer/laei' (the slash indicates a new line) and '162' on the back. Both beetles are pinned with old large pins with metallic heads onto small pieces of polyethylene, each of these in turn being pinned with modern steel pins with nylon heads. Fabricius's description only applies to one of the two specimens, which (i) has tubercles on the pronotum ('thorax . . . punctis elevatis'), (ii) has the rostrum with a low keel ('rostrum

. . . subcarinatum') and (iii) is similar to *Curculio moerens* Fabricius, 1792 ('Statura C. moerentis . . .') [*Barynotus moerens*, a broad-nosed weevil]. This specimen belongs to the genus *Tylotus* Schoenherr, 1823 (subfamily ENTIMINAE) and is here selected as lectotype of *Curculio meyerlaei* Fabricius, 1801, by the first author. The second specimen could have been added later and is clearly of a different species; the two original pins differ in their head size, indicating their separate origins.

3. Panzer (1803, nr. 7) purported to re-describe the Fabrician species. Panzer's publication has sometimes been dated as from 1794, but Evenhuis (1997) has, using a variety of bibliographic resources, fixed the date as 17 May 1803. Panzer used a misspelling *Curculio megerlei*, as follows: 'CURCULIO Megerlei. *Der Megerlesche Rüsselkäfer. CURCULIO Megerlei*: fasciis, thorace elytris que scabris cinereo-lineatis, elytris ante apicem unidentatis. *Fabric. System. Eleutherat. I. II. n. 84. p. 521. Habitat in Austria. Dn. de Megerle. Femora omnia dentata. Antennarum clava cinerea.*' The name '*Curculio megerlei* Fabr.' is also used in the plate caption. The description is based on a single specimen (Panzer, 1805, p. 132) sent by Megerle. It is clearly a species of the genus *Plinthus* Germar, 1817, as usually understood (subfamily MOLYTINAE). Panzer (1803) thus misspelled the Fabrician name, and described a specimen of a different species. Panzer's name, as an incorrect subsequent spelling, is unavailable (Article 33.3 of the Code).

4. Latreille (1804, p. 186) transferred the Fabrician nominal species (the species now in *Tylotus*) to *Brachyrhinus* Latreille, 1802, as *Brachyrhinus meyerlaei*. This generic name is now suppressed (Opinion 982, BZN 29: 19–24, March 1972), but the concept was broadly equivalent to the present broad-nosed weevils. The type species of *Brachyrhinus* is *Curculio ligustici* Linnaeus, 1758, now placed in *Otiorhynchus* Germar, 1822.

5. Illiger (1805, p. 155) emended the spelling and questioned whether the specimen sent by Megerle (probably to Panzer; see paragraph 3 above) belonged to the species described by Fabricius: '*C. megerlei* fuscus etc. muss man lesen. Die Beschreibung passt wenig auf den von Hn. Megerle selbst erhaltenen Käfer. Panzer Faun. Germ. 87. tab. 6.' [*C. megerlei* fuscus etc. one must read. The description only weakly fits the beetle received from Hn Megerle. Panzer Faun. Germ. 87. tab. 6] The number quoted for the plate in Panzer is wrong. Whilst this name appears to be an intentional (although unjustified) emendation because of the association with the collector's name Megerle, the provisions of Article 3.2.1 are not met, so the name is not thereby made available. Illiger's concept was that of the species now in *Tylotus*.

6. Germar (1817, p. 340) described the genus *Plinthus*, including four named species: '31) *Plinthus* nob. *Curc. Megerlei, variolosus, Chrysops* Hb., *Lixus caliginosus* Fb.' These species are *Curculio megerlei* (although it cannot be determined whether he was referring to Fabricius' concept as renamed by Illiger, or Panzer's concept), *C. variolosus* Fabricius, 1775 (now a synonym of *Minyops carinatus* (Linnaeus, 1767), the genus being in the same subtribe as *Plinthus*), *C. chrysops* Herbst, 1797 (now a valid species in *Tylotus* Schoenherr, 1823) and *C. caliginosus* Fabricius, 1775 (now a valid species in *Mitoplinthus* Reitter, 1897, this genus also being in the same subtribe as *Plinthus*). This genus is thus originally a mixture of species now placed in two different subfamilies within CURCULIONIDAE (ENTIMINAE – genus *Tylotus* — and MOLYTINAE: MOLYTINI: PLINTHINA).

7. Dejean (1821, p. 88) included in his new genus *Meleus* four available nominal species (*Curculio megerlei* Fabricius, 1801, *C. variolosus* Fabricius, 1775, *C. carinatus* Linnaeus, 1767 (as a synonym of *variolosus* and with Olivier as author) and *C. caliginosus* Fabricius, 1775), as well as six nomina nuda, with another species being doubtfully included. The content of the genus as established suggests that Dejean was using Panzer's concept of the Fabrician *Curculio megerlei* – the species now in *Plinthus*.

8. Schoenherr (1823, col. 1143) designated '*Curculio megerlei* Fabricius' as type species for *Plinthus*, and synonymised *Meleus* Dejean, 1821 with *Plinthus*.

9. Schoenherr (1823, col. 1145) described a new genus *Tylotus* with type species *Curculio chrysops* Herbst, 1797.

10. Schoenherr (1826, p. 206) used *Tyloderes* as a new genus for *Curculio chrysops* Herbst, 1797, with no mention of the previously proposed name. Thus *Tyloderes* Schoenherr, 1826, is a junior objective synonym of *Tylotus* Schoenherr, 1823, having the same type species (Article 61.3 of the Code). *Tylotus* Schoenherr, 1823 is currently accepted as a genus near *Otiorhynchus* Germar, 1824, but it has been considered as a subgenus of the latter until recently (Magnano, 1988).

11. Germar (1836, p. 15) placed *Brachyrhinus meyerlaei* (Fabricius) in the genus *Tyloderes* Schoenherr, 1826, as '*Tyloderes megerlei*'. At this point, although it was not stated, nomenclaturally the genus *Plinthus* Germar, 1817, became a senior subjective synonym of *Tylotus* Schoenherr, 1823 and *Tyloderes* Schoenherr, 1826 (following paragraph 8 above).

12. Schoenherr (1842, p. 322) used '*Plinthus megerlei* Panzer' as a valid species, and accompanied the name with a short diagnosis by Boheman. Schoenherr (1842, p. 322) stated that '*Curculio megerlei* Fabricius' was a different species to '*Plinthus megerlei* Panzer', and belonged to *Tyloderes* (thus following Germar's (1842) placement). While this action clarifies Schoenherr's concept of *Plinthus* as similar to that of Panzer (see paragraph 3 above), it does not make '*Plinthus megerlei* Panzer' available. Moreover, even though Schoenherr clarified that '*Curculio megerlei* Fabricius' and '*Curculio megerlei* Fabricius *sensu* Panzer' are different species, the unrecognised nomenclatural synonymy of *Plinthus* Germar, 1817 and *Tylotus* Schoenherr, 1823. Article 69.2.7 cannot apply, since Germar, 1817 had not expressly stated that he was using Panzer's misidentification (paragraph 6 above). Article 70.3 cannot apply since the action was taken prior to the existence of the Code.

13. Schoenherr (1843, p. 389) reiterated his 1842 placement of '*Curculio megerlei* Fabricius' in *Tyloderes* and added a species description by Boheman. This description was based on a single specimen borrowed from the Copenhagen Museum, probably the one selected above as the lectotype.

14. Marseul (1872, p. 446) placed '*Tyloderes megerlei*' (Fabricius) in the genus *Otiorhynchus* Germar, 1822, where it stood for a long time as *Otiorhynchus* (*Tyloderes*) *megerlei* (Fabricius, 1801) (Lona, 1936, p. 219). At this point, although it was not recognised, nomenclaturally the genus *Plinthus* Germar, 1817, became a senior subjective synonym of *Otiorhynchus* Germar, 1822.

15. Westwood (1838, p. 36) designated *Curculio caliginosus* Fabricius, 1775 (now in *Mitoplinthus* Reitter, 1897), as type species for the genus *Plinthus*. This type species designation is invalid, being published after that by Schoenherr (1823).

16. Lacordaire (1863, p. 358, 360) separated the two Stirpes in which Schoenherr (1842, pp. 319 and 331) had divided the genus *Plinthus*. He selected the names *Meleus* Dejean for the first ('Stirps I.- Corpus ovatum') and *Plinthus* for the second ('Stirps 2.- Corpus elongatum. Femora semper dentata'). However, he failed to properly identify *Plinthus* Germar, since the type species belongs to *Tylotus*, as shown in the above paragraphs. He placed *Curculio megerlei* sensu Schoenherr (i.e. Panzer's concept) in the genus *Meleus* Dejean (although he also quoted it in synonymy of *Plinthus*). He included in *Plinthus* one North American species (*Plinthus carinatus* Boheman, 1842, now in *Steremnius* Schoenherr, 1836), five other species included in Schoenherr (1842), namely *Curculio tigratus* Rossi, 1792, *Plinthus granulatus* Boheman, 1842, *P. schalleri* Germar, 1824, *Rhynchaenus porculus* Fabricius, 1801 (all of them now in *Neoplinthus* Bedel, 1884) and *Curculio caliginosus* Fabricius, 1775 (now in *Mitoplinthus*), and several described later, namely *Plinthus mucronatus* Rosenhauer, 1847 (now in *Neoplinthus*), *P. parthenius* Costa, 1858 (now doubtfully in *Plinthus*), *P. nivalis* Jacquelin du Val, 1854 (now in *Iberoplinthus* Meregalli, 1986), *P. chevrolatii* Jacquelin du Val, 1854 (now in *Aparopion* Hampe, 1861), *P. musicus* Wollaston, 1860 and *P. velutinus* Wollaston, 1860 (both now in *Alloplinthus* Solari, 1941). This is clearly Westwood's concept of *Plinthus*, although not acknowledged as such.

17. Lacordaire (1863) placed *Meleus* in 'Groupe I. Molytides vrais' of his Molytides and *Plinthus* in his newly erected 'Groupe II. PLINTHIDES' of the same tribe. This vernacular name was later latinised to PLINTHIDAE by Kirsch (1869, p. 177). The tribe PLINTHINI Lacordaire, used currently in MOLYTINAE systematics is, because it is based on a misidentified genus (para. 16), a source of confusion and instability.

18. Faust (1886, p. 27) designated a type species for *Meleus*, stating 'Meleus Lac. typ. Megerlei Panz.'. This is an available type species designation for *Meleus* Dejean, even if the author of the genus is incorrectly quoted. The provisions of Article 11.10 and 49 of the Code cannot apply, since Faust did not recognise *C. megerlei* Panzer as a misidentification. With this designation, *Meleus* Dejean became an objective synonym of *Plinthus* Germar.

19. Faust (1886, p. 27) designated a type species for *Plinthus*, stating 'Plinthus Germ. typ. caliginosus Fabr.'. This designation is invalid because Schoenherr (1823, col. 1143) had already designated an available species, even though he had subsequently clarified that it was a misidentification.

20. Weise (1907, p. 13) described the genus *Epipolaeus* (type species *Curculio caliginosus* Fabricius, 1775, by subsequent designation by Méquignon, 1938, p.[469]), to replace *Plinthus* sensu Reitter, i.e. *Plinthus* sensu Lacordaire. This genus is a junior subjective synonym of *Mitoplinthus* Reitter, 1897 (Meregalli, 1986).

21. Silfverberg (1984) designated '*Curculio megerlei* Panzer 1805' as type species of *Meleus* and confirmed its objective synonymy with *Plinthus*, in ignorance that the species name was not available and that the designation had already been made by Faust (1886) (see para. 19).

22. The names currently in use and which, or the concepts of which, are threatened by the instability revealed, are the genus *Plinthus* Germar, 1817 (ca. 75 species), its type species *Curculio megerlei* Panzer, 1803, the holding tribe PLINTHINI, and the genus *Tylotus* Schoenherr, 1823 (three species). Whilst *Otiorhynchus* Germar, 1822 is currently not at risk, a reversal of the removal of *Tylotus* from subgeneric status

would require new combinations for more than 600 species and subspecies. The changes required to these well-known names through correction of the current usage to observe the rules of the Code are detailed in the following paragraphs. To preserve stability Alonso-Zarazaga & Lyal (1999) maintained current usage, despite being aware of the problem. A list of references from the past 50 years showing the usage of these names is held by the Commission Secretariat.

23. *Plinthus* Germar, 1817, would be the valid name in ENTIMINAE (where it has never been placed) for the genera *Tylotus* Schoenherr, 1823 and *Tyloderes* Schoenherr, 1826. The last two are objective synonyms of each other, and subjective synonyms of *Plinthus*. Three species currently in *Tylotus* would have to change their combinations to a genus where they have never been placed (excepting the type species of *Plinthus*).

24. *Plinthus* auctt. would require a name. The first available name is *Plinthomeleus* Reitter, 1912 (type species by original designation *Plinthus merklia* Frivaldzsky, 1893), currently a subgenus of *Plinthus* auctt. However, a new name would still be required for the subgenus *Plinthus* auctt. itself. Under the name *Plinthus*, the genus has been completely revised recently (Kippenberg, 1981; Meregalli, 1985; Davidian, 1995; Meregalli & Davidian, 2007). Some 75 species would require a new genus name.

25. *Plinthus megerlei* Panzer, 1803 would require a new name. Kippenberg (1981, p. 112) selected a female lectotype from the named Panzer specimens held in the Historical collections of the Humboldt-Universität, Berlin, the only one of the series of 7 matching the current concept of '*Plinthus megerlei* (Panzer)', which he believed to be an available species name (other specimens represented other species of *Plinthus*). Because of this, the identity of *Plinthus megerlei* Fabricius *sensu* Panzer is now clearly established. This species has always been called *Plinthus megerlei* and has no available synonyms which could be used as replacement names.

26. The family-group name PLINTHINI, which has been in use since Lacordaire (1863) for a tribe including both *Meleus* and *Plinthus* auctt. and has been used in recent systematic papers discussing the classification of the subfamily MOLYTINAE (OR HYLOBIINAE) (Marshall, 1932; Solari, 1941; Kuschel, 1987), is currently a source of nomenclatural instability and confusion. No replacement name based on a generic name reliably related to these two genera exists, so we are referring this problem to the Commission under Article 65.2.3 of the Code.

27. The International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature is accordingly asked:

(1) to use its plenary power:

- (a) to rule that the specific name *megerlei* Panzer, 1803, as published in the binomen *Curculio megerlei*, is available from its publication by Panzer (1803) with the endorsement that it is not to be taken as a misidentification of *Curculio meyerlaei* Fabricius, 1801;
- (b) set aside all previous type fixations for *Curculio megerlei* Panzer, 1803 prior to that by Kippenberg (1981);
- (c) to set aside all previous fixations of type species for the nominal genus *Plinthus* Germar, 1817, and designate *Curculio megerlei* Panzer, 1803, as ruled to be available in (1)(a) above;
- (d) to set aside all previous fixations of type species for the nominal genus *Meleus* Dejean, 1821, prior to the designation made by Faust (1886) of

Curculio megerlei Panzer, 1803, as ruled to be available in (1)(a) above, as the type species;

- (e) to rule that the family-group name PLINTHINI Lacordaire, 1863, is based on *Plinthus* Germar, 1817, as defined by the type species designation in (1) (c) above;
- (2) to place on the Official List of Generic Names in Zoology the following names:
 - (a) *Plinthus* Germar, 1817 (gender: masculine), type species *Curculio megerlei* Panzer, 1803 as ruled in (1)(c) above;
 - (b) *Tylotus* Schoenherr, 1823 (gender: masculine), type species *Curculio chrysops* Herbst, 1797, by original designation;
- (3) to place on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology the following names:
 - (a) *meyerlaei* Fabricius, 1801, as published in the binomen *Curculio meyerlaei* and as defined by the lectotype designated in para. 2 above;
 - (b) *megerlei* Panzer, 1803, as published in the binomen *Curculio megerlei* (specific name of the type species of *Plinthus* Germar, 1817 and of *Meleus* Dejean, 1821, as ruled in (1)(c) and (1)(d) above;
 - (c) *chrysops* Herbst, 1797, as published in the binomen *Curculio chrysops*, specific name of the type species of *Tylotus* Schoenherr, 1823 and of *Tyloderes* Schoenherr, 1826;
- (4) to place on the Official List of Family-Group Names in Zoology the name PLINTHINI Lacordaire, 1863, type genus *Plinthus* Germar, 1817;
- (5) to place in the Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Generic Names in Zoology the following names:
 - (a) *Meleus* Dejean, 1821 (a junior objective synonym of *Plinthus* Germar, 1817);
 - (b) *Tyloderes* Schoenherr, 1826 (a junior objective synonym of *Tylotus* Schoenherr, 1823).

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